

UPDATE

Flu Facts for Everyone

The flu shot uses an inactivated or “killed” vaccine. This vaccine **can’t** give you the flu. However, flu vaccine, like other vaccines, can occasionally cause a reaction. Feeling some response to the shot is not unusual. The vaccine acts to stimulate your immune system and prepare you to resist infection. If you do experience a reaction to the flu shot, it is usually local and mild—redness, soreness, and swelling at the site of the injection. Usually, if you have this kind of reaction, you may find that it doesn't interfere with normal daily activity and does not make you feel sick. The symptoms typically cause discomfort, not sickness, and last for a day or two.

On June 17, 2003, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved an intranasal, trivalent, cold-adapted, live, attenuated influenza (Flu) vaccine for use in healthy persons aged 5–49 years to prevent influenza A and B. Inactivated influenza vaccine continues to be available and is indicated for persons aged 6 months and older who are healthy or who have chronic medical conditions. The newly approved vaccine provides an important new option for vaccinating healthy persons 5-49 years of age who either wish to avoid influenza or are in close contact with persons at high risk for developing serious complications from influenza infection.

1. People can die from the flu.

Influenza (flu) is a highly infectious disease of the lungs, and it can lead to pneumonia. Each year about 114,000 people in the U.S. are hospitalized and about 36,000 people die because of the flu. Most who die are 65 years and older. But children younger than 2 years old are as likely as those over 65 to have to go to the hospital because of the flu.

2. Even if I get the flu vaccine, I can still get a mild case of the flu.

Flu vaccine protects most people from the flu. A person who receives a flu vaccine can get the flu but will be far less sick than someone who has the flu and has not received the flu vaccine. Flu vaccine does not protect you from other viruses that sometimes feel like the flu.

3. Everyone cannot take the flu vaccine.

You might not be able to get this protection if you are allergic to eggs (used in making the injectable vaccine), are very sick with a high fever, or have had a severe reaction to the flu vaccine in the past.

4. You must get a flu vaccine before December.

Flu vaccine can be given before or during the flu season. While the best time to get flu vaccine is October or November, getting vaccinated in December or later can still protect you against the flu.



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